

**THE STORY OF THE WOMEN'S ANTI-RACISM ACTION GROUP
(WARAG) 1872-1985**

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ANNE RUCK, ALLYSON DAVYS**

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>>RINGA HĀPAI: (Te reo Māori). Welcome to this important webinar. Ko tangata Tiriti ahau, ko Jenny Rankine tāku ingoa and I'm your Chair. We acknowledge all those whose land we're standing today. We acknowledge all of you attending from the four winds, all corners of the world, overseas as well as in Aotearoa New Zealand where we are Treaty partners. We also thank our tech and moderation volunteers Noel and Carol.

This webinar outlines a ground-breaking 1984 report about institutional racism from the then Department of Social Welfare in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland by nine feminist women on the staff. They named themselves the Women's Anti-Racism Action Group, WARAG for short. The government department they worked for was responsible for the welfare of children and for administering benefits and pensions such as for unemployment.

This is the first time in 37 years that WARAG members have got together to tell the story behind their report. The five available WARAG members, one Māori and four Pākehā, will each introduce themselves and speak briefly. Lainey will outline the context of the time, Heather will talk about why they wrote the report, Allyson will outline the group's process, Anne will describe the outcomes and Tanya will discuss what they learned.

Please write any pātai, questions, that you have about this kōrero, what they say in the Q&A, not in the chat, including who you are addressing it to if you want to ask a particular person, and moderator Carol will collect them for me to ask at the end of the five presentations. We've tried to allow lots of time for questions and discussion. Now Lainey will start us off.

>>MS COWAN: Tēnā koe Jenny. (Te reo Māori) ki te Whanganui-a-Tara where it's 15 degrees and cold sorry. At the time I was invited into this group in 1982 I was employed by DSW in Tāmaki Makaurau on social work projects that aimed at reducing the passage of children and young people into State care. The first project was aimed at young people coming before the courts in central city, and my next job was as a Matua Whāngai worker working collaboratively with other agencies for Māori families and children in the central Auckland area.

Now the context of the time for our WARAG mahi; internationally -- this is a reminder for many of us who were alive at that time of course -- the 70s and 80s were times of civil rights movements and protests. Notably anti-nuclear, anti-sexist and anti-racist protests. Women were in the forefront of many of these movements, for example the women at Greenham Common in the UK on anti-nuclear issues.

Also pertinent to those of us working with and for children and their families, in 1979 it was the International Year of the Child focusing on the legal status of children, their treatment, and it signalled a new move towards children's rights, new.

Also at that time there was to me a strong international view of best practice social work being at the cutting edge of social change and feminists also working in that space. There'd been a wounding critique of social work being a disabling profession, which of course we wished to refute.

Nationally all of these international movements were reflected in Aotearoa, for example the nuclear-free Pacific and nuclear-free New Zealand protests and there was significant involvement by feminists in them all. Unique to Aotearoa were the annual Waitangi day Tiriti protests transitioning over the years from mostly at Waitangi and Tai Tokerau protests with the cry "the Treaty is a fraud" to national protests "honour the Treaty".

In terms of anti-racism, this culminated in the 1981 protests against the Springbok rugby tour. This forged coalitions between Māori and other anti-racism activists who were then challenged to address domestic racism.

The 70s and 80s also saw a Māori and cultural political renaissance. We've been celebrating many of those over this hui. There were the land protests from the Māori land March, the land protests at Whaingaroa, Raglan, and in Tāmaki Makaurau, Takaparawhau, Bastion Point. There was the establishment of the Kōhanga Reo by Māori communities, the establishment of a specific Māori political party by Matiu Rata when he left the Labour Party and set up the Mana Motuhake Party, and there'd been the setting up by government, in an initially restricted way, of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975.

And locally in Tāmaki Makaurau this was our home and workplace and at that time, well it was New Zealand's largest and most multicultural Māori and Pasifika city. It was the centre of many Māori protests and protesters and this hui has already featured speakers from some of those, Ngā Tamatoa, Takaparawhau; for many Aucklanders the occupation of this traditional Māori land and the Police removal of the occupiers was a huge

consciousness-raising experience. The city also hosted a very active National Council of Churches programme on racism.

Lastly, our workplace. We all worked within the DSW, Department of Social Welfare, in the Auckland region. We were aware of Māori community concerns about DSW in the late 1970s and ongoing. ACORD, a Māori, well, an Auckland community group, had specifically criticised the DSW children's homes and you may have already heard Oliver Sutherland talking about this mahi.

They concluded that in residential care for children and young people nothing short of restructuring the race and sex composition, the administration and policy was needed. There had been no overall response by DSW to this report to address these structural concerns. No reira, over to Heather for why our group formed.

>>MS McDOWELL: Tēnā koe Lainey. Tēnā koutou katoa. (Te reo Māori). My ancestors and parents are from Ireland arriving here in 1955, my name is Heather McDowell. When this work was being done leading to the writing of this report, I was the regional psychologist for the northern region of the Department of Social Welfare. That was a completely new position in the Department and I had started in it in September 1981.

So why did we do the research? Well, some of us had gone to a WOW meeting, Women Opposed to Waitangi, and were challenged by women outside the system saying what are you doing as workers inside the Department to challenge racism?

We were also becoming increasingly aware of feedback from Māori clients about their frustration, their distrust, and their poor treatment from the Department. We were also part of shared concern about racist practises in not only our own Department, such as with the ACORD research, but also in the wider society of Aotearoa. And also we believe that Māori, as indigenous people of Aotearoa, had a right to the power and resources.

Over to Allyson now to talk about the process of the group.

>>MS DAVYS: Kia ora tātou katoa. I am a New Zealand Pākehā of Scottish and Irish ancestry. Ko Allyson Davys tōku ingoa. When WARAG was formed I was employed as a social work trainer within the Auckland area. At the end of 1984 I went on maternity leave but continued my involvement and work with WARAG as a group and I never did return to employment within the department.

I'm going to outline the process of the group and also the research processes. We were a group of women who shared feminist and anti-racist philosophies and who chose to come together to research racism within our own department. As a group, we worked in a collaborative model and used consensus decision-making.

After we formed, we took our research proposal to the DSW management and we were given approval to work in work hours. Two hours per fortnight were allocated, which inevitably was not sufficient, so we all contribute a lot of our own time to work on this project.

The group started with three goals, the first was to increase our awareness of racism within Aotearoa, the second was to identify aspects of racism within the Department, and the third was to formulate strategies which could eliminate racism within that Department.

Initially we identified 12 areas of interest, but focused down on four for our particular research. These areas were staff ethnicity in Tāmaki Makaurau, staff recruitment and selection, staff training and the departmental environment.

Our process for gathering the data varied. Initially we started, we focussed on the staff ethnicity, and it's interesting to remember that at that time that government departments did not have a note of the ethnic composition of staff. So what we did was that we compiled a survey which was mailed to over 1,300 staff members in Tāmaki Makaurau, and that was both social work practitioners and clerical staff. We had a 68% return rate, which at that time was actually considered to be quite low for an internal survey. However, that return identified that there was 82% Pākehā, 10% Māori, 5.5% Pasifika and 2.5 a combination of other ethnicities.

When looking at staff recruitment and selection, we considered that as a broader process. At that time the State Services Commission was in control, or oversaw the selection and recruitment and selection of employees with the government. So what we did was we looked at the policies, the procedures, the protocols of a broad number of overarching bodies such as the State Services Commission, the public service, the Department's own policies, and out of that we collated our findings.

Staff training we also considered nationally. Again, at that stage the Department of Social Welfare -- no, sorry, the Minister of Social Welfare had the ability to approve any training that was deemed appropriate for people working in social services, and the Department of Social Welfare had a mandate to provide all of the training for social workers in the country at that stage, not just for Social Welfare, but also for health, for Māori Affairs, for what we then called the voluntary agencies, now we call them NGOs, so that it had a very broad influence around the training, particularly of social workers in Aotearoa.

Again, what we did was we looked broadly at policies, protocols, we looked at the curricular of the different training institutions, and the training bodies within the Department.

Finally, we looked at the departmental environment the and again we brought that back to Tāmaki Makaurau and we gathered our data through individual visits to sites.

Throughout all of our stages of our research process, consultation was important to us and we approached a range of Māori consultants and Pākehā anti-racism workers from outside the Department to give us feedback and to challenge our work, and Tanya will address that in more detail later on.

After our collection of our data and our analysis, we concluded that our working premise that the Department of Social Welfare practises institutional racism had been substantiated in the four areas which were researched. We presented 34 recommendations, over a third of them relating to recruitment and selection.

Having completed the report, we presented it to the Director-General of Department of Social Welfare in November 1984, and we accompanied that with a recommendation that its release would be followed with a series of regional workshops so that staff could understand our findings. We were very aware and we were very clear that we were talking about institutional and not individual racism.

Having submitted our -- presenting our report, we had no response. The report subsequently was released to the media in August 1985 by unknown sources and made headlines in the New Zealand Herald. To this day we don't know how that process occurred.

WARAG members were invited to meet with the Director-General and with the Minister of Social Welfare. At that meeting we were told that WARAG's work was deemed to be over and approval for us to continue to meet and to work on the topic was withdrawn.

Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa. Over to you Anne.

>>MS RUCK: Thank you Allyson. Kia ora koutou katoa e hoa ma. Well, I'm talking about the outcomes of WARAG work and I'm going to address institutional shock first. So the major outcome at the time was an intense institutional shock and I would describe it as fear as well, that institutional racism had been written at all.

This shock prompted two further reports to be written by the Department. These were the Māori Advisory Report 1985 and Puau-Te-Ata-Tu 1998, a major report that

involved wide consultation with iwi. All three reports created a reaction within the department and possibly, I believe anyway, the entire public service.

Puau-Te-Ata-Tu recommendations caused changes in six major areas. There were other recommendations as well, 13 in all, but I'm just looking or discussing right now the social work areas; and these were the Children and Young Persons Act which was extant at the time, 1974, it was -- sorry, the Child Welfare Act was extant at the time and it was replaced with Children and Young Persons Act 1989. And this new Act provided the funding of entities called Iwi Social Services, independent legal access for iwi via FGC referrals, legal requirements to include whānau, hapū, iwi in all decision-making for children and their placements when in care.

So that was revolutionary really. The Act demanded consultation with iwi, hapū and whānau. You couldn't proceed, in fact, in the legal process without that occurring and this new Act brought this revolutionary change really.

Another thing that occurred was management committees for institutions were instituted and they had to reflect local communities, and that included local iwi. The Matua Whāngai programme was broadened and funding was increased quite a bit. Recruitment and staffing changed to address the needs of the Māori community. Training, Māori perspectives were included and Māori trainers were employed. Communications, written material, reception areas were to reflect the Māori community. We got bicultural pamphlets, we had a Pasifika and Māori expression in the reception areas. So there was quite a change following Puau-Te-Ata-Tu.

The WARAG recommendations were also implemented and probably sooner. We recommended that Māori and Pasifika staff were specifically recruited and that occurred. Training in social work policy to include Māori and Pasifika perspectives, the child abuse manual that moved into training at that time included Pākehā, Māori and Pasifika world views throughout its literature, and that's a good example of the change in training policy that occurred at the time.

However, progress has really -- could only at best be described as erratic. There's been failures, but I still think there'll be no going back to how it was when I first joined the Department in 1975, which was incredibly monocultural.

WARAG and the group of people who advised and reviewed our work can take some credit for being one of the prompts that led to changes not only in the Department that we worked for, but also all the changes that have happened subsequently in all government

departments. Most government departments as far as I'm aware now honour the Treaty and look at partnerships.

To varying degrees each Department came to look at its responsibilities of representatives of the Crown and therefore as a Treaty partner. However, I have got to say that these changes, even though they were broad and really significant at the time, haven't really changed outcomes, it hasn't really changed outcomes for Māori children, hasn't really changed outcomes for Māori families, and indeed for all New Zealand families.

Tēnā koutou katoa, ka mutu. Over to you Tanya.

>>MS CUMBERLAND: Kia ora Anne. Kia ora koutou katoa. No Yorkshire i Ingarangi ōku tīpuna, hei tangata Tiriti ahau, ko Tanya Cumberland tāku ingoa. At the time of the WARAG research I was in a new job in the Auckland regional office of DSW, the job was Assistant Regional Director (Development).

My task for today's session was to draw out from our recent discussions some of the things that we have learned from our WARAG experience of 40 long years ago. I'll speak briefly to four aspects, one, the shared values within our group; two, the external consultation process; three, working for change from inside an organisation, and I'll finish off with a few reflections on a more general basis.

So first of all, it was important, as Allyson mentioned, for WARAG members to have a shared value base of feminism, social work and psychology in one instance and also a commitment to social justice. This meant that we had a level of trust amongst ourselves and we didn't have to spend time justifying and arguing our positions.

But although we had these values in common, we realised we were at different levels in our understanding of racism. So we undertook an initial three months self-education programme as a group. We read recent literature, discussed personal experiences and issues, watched videos and films, spent time at an urban marae and some of us were learning te reo.

This resulted in us developing a shared understanding and knowledge base about racism in Aotearoa from which we could then move ahead into our research. The second point, external consultation. Having an external consultative network of both Māori consultants and Pākehā anti-racism workers with whom to discuss issues, turned out to be vital for us. Some of us had been working with resource people like National Council of Churches programme on racism and Māori Women's Welfare League and other groups in our every-day jobs.

So these people and others were keen to make themselves available to us in a loose consultative network. They self-selected. We took our draft report to them and that group questioned the use of the mild bureaucratic language in our draft report and challenged us to be more direct and more clear.

As a result of this feedback, we went back to the drawing board, we rewrote the report and decided to use the term "institutional racism" in our title. And as Anne has said, the term seems to have caught the attention of quite a few readers.

The third point I want to make is about working for change from the inside of an organisation. There are, of course, both advantages and disadvantages when trying to change an organisation from the inside. I must say that as we brainstormed this topic the disadvantages seemed to flow more easily than the advantages.

But on the positive side, as internal staff members, we were familiar with the workings of the Department, we already had established relationships and some personal influence amongst colleagues in a range of different divisions in the Department, and our team members were often supportive of our work.

Secondly, although we worked very much as a group of equal colleagues during the research, it was quite useful, I think, for us to have a research team member who was in the senior management team, and had access to the Regional Director and to regional resources, like the secondment of a staff member with statistical skills.

There were, of course, doubters and skeptics among staff. We couldn't assume that others understood racism or viewed it as a priority for DSW. There was resistance from some staff. Some of us also experienced sexism and homophobia, both covert and overt, from some colleagues. We had no protection against this and at times felt quite vulnerable and unsafe.

Another point is that because the project was not initiated by the hierarchy in the Department, we had no formal mandate or paid contract as internal researchers. The Regional Director did initially support the group's work, but others in the hierarchy could ignore or dismiss it as some did.

And of course when research results are not popular or are misunderstood, internal researchers can easily be labelled as troublemakers and single issues people and can be pushed to the margins. Subsequent job applications may not be taken seriously. All of these things happened to different members of WARAG, as one of our members commented, WARAG certainly didn't help the career options of some of us. And indeed two of us lost our jobs after the report came out.

We recognise in retrospect that it would have been wise for us to set up formal structures of support for the duration of our work and also for the period after the report was released, because in some ways that was the most difficult time.

And finally just a few reflections and questions on a more general level. WARAG underestimated the many obstacles to change in a big bureaucracy. We recognise in retrospect we didn't spend enough time identifying and nurturing potential allies both within the Department and outside in the community. We could have talked more with other staff, particularly Māori staff, with our trade unions, with mana whenua groups in Tāmaki Makaurau and also with beneficiary and consumer groups. This may have resulted in a bigger groundswell of support for change from within the Department.

We also recognise our naivete as researchers. None of us had professional training and/or experience in research apart from the odd brief university paper we may have done. Undoubtedly in this age of sophisticated research protocols and accountabilities, current researchers would design and implement this kind of process very differently from the way we did it.

We also know that our original goal, that the original goals of the research were limited and focused on operational aspects in the Department only. We could have included the voices of DSW consumers in our work and then assessed the outcomes for them of DSW services. This would have changed the nature of the research project and was probably beyond our capabilities and resources at that stage.

But overall, as Anne mentioned, when we look back on our work and the work of other researchers over the last 40 years into the Department of Social Welfare, Oranga Tamariki and other iterations of the Department, we are left with a big enduring question as to why we have not produced meaningful and improved outcomes for children and families in Aotearoa.

As a postscript I want to add that we have reminded ourselves of the old adage, that it does take a generation or more for substantial change in society to take place. And I personally take hope from the fact that over 40,000 people have enrolled in this Te Tiriti-based futures anti-racism webinar. We congratulate the organising team and all the amazing kaikōrero who have contributed their wisdom so far. And we also acknowledge that our younger generations are speaking out loud and clear in this day and age.

Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā rā tātou katoa. Kei a koe Jenny.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Kia ora Tanya, and kia ora to the audience members who've sent in lots of pātai. The first one I want to ask everybody, and this is not directed at anybody, maybe Lainey could start, "what are easy wins that we could do right now following this kōrero?" Do you want to have a go Lainey?

>>MS COWAN: Easy wins.

>>MS CUMBERLAND: Nothing's easy.

>>MS COWAN: Support tangata whenua to -- I mean the thing is we couldn't have won in some ways, eh, as a government Department, and I've thought a lot about our concentration and thinking that just recruiting more Māori would help. Because all we did was maybe put more Māori in a position where they could do very little, except at an individual level.

And I've been really enthused by the kōrero on this hui about the setting up of the Māori Health Authority. And I think initiatives like that, Whānau Ora, the Māori Health Authority, giving back the power where it can really work for children and young people will be great, yeah, that's me.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Okay, who else would like to talk about possible easy wins? Sorry, Heather's got her hand up.

>>MS McDOWELL: Because I've blurred the background, my hand goes all blurry too which isn't helpful. Yeah, I tautoko what you've said, Lainey. I think the whole thing about getting your support team around you, finding people who have similar allied views and are willing to, you know, go on this journey to look at what's not working, to look at ways that could be addressed, to work both from within your organisation and outside of it.

But I think, as others have said earlier on in this presentation, one of the things we didn't do was, we didn't do very well, was to really gather that groundswell of support, and I think that's a number one, and of course always, always fundamental to that is partnership with tangata whenua.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Okay, another question. This is from Madeleine to the Pākehā members of the panel. "What do Pākehā need to do more of to change current outcomes for whānau?" Who'd like to take that one? Somebody?

>>MS McDOWELL: I'd say support tangata whenua, support them, go to them, say what can we do, how can we support you and be prepared to challenge our Pākehā colleagues, co-workers, allies whenever they criticise, argue, resist, whatever. That's in a nutshell.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Okay, thanks Heather. Gay has asked, "how do we stay unaffected by ongoing colonisation and institutions and organisations that continue to be unwilling to confront racism?" Lainey, do you want to kick that off? How do we stay unaffected?

>>MS COWAN: I don't think we can stay unaffected, we'd be -- that's unrealistic. To me I feel all we can do is protect ourselves in other ways, sort of be strengthened by the people we have around us, maybe even stay away from people who are toxic to Te Tiriti environment. So major thing for me.

>>MS CUMBERLAND: Yes, I tautoko your comment, Lainey. I actually don't think it's possible to be unaffected. I think that we -- our feelings are very much a part of our beings and our work, and the important thing is to keep our focus on Te Tiriti as partners. I think when things get difficult it's particularly important to have people around who you can go to and talk things through. I think that one of the important things for us as Pākehā sometimes is to step aside and just encourage the amazing initiatives that are being taken by many Māori people in all of our organisations.

But, for example, I myself am not in any major organisation at the moment but every day, you know, you come across, we come across racist moments and it's a matter of calling them out, you know, then and there, and offering to do some more talking with the people if they want to.

So I just think, you know, there are little things that we can do every day.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Thank you Tanya. Allyson, you had your hand up.

>>MS DAVYS: Oh I think probably Tanya has addressed many of the things I was going to say. But I guess for me it's also about being willing to give up power. So to actually be willing to be humble, to ask questions, to not know, and to follow as opposed to feeling that we need to always be leading.

So to me there's something about humility in terms of what we know. And I guess it's slightly off the question, but I was also thinking about many, well, most of us here have belonged to professional organisations, we are professional helpers. And I think that there is a real opportunity for us to gather that -- if you like the broader values and ethics of our professions and to challenge the organisations which are now actually colonising our professions and shaping what we do, because of the organisational outputs, KPIs. So it's about somehow or other reclaiming our sense of professional purpose.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Thank you Allyson. There's a question here from Andrea -- no, sorry I was looking at the wrong one. This is one that relates to social work, so this is for those of you who are still or have recently been social workers. "How did your knowledge of being a social worker give you permission to do this mahi in the first place?" So I'm not sure who that applies to.

>>MS COWAN: Well, I guess because I mentioned it, I think we'd had strong, like I said in my presentation, there'd been whole books written about including social work as a disabling profession at the time. And there was a strong, I think, social work response at that time to not -- to have some awareness of how disabling we could be, and how to attempt to turn that around.

Anne, you had your hand up eh.

>>MS RUCK: Yeah, I waved. As a social worker I was exposed every day to the effects on children and families, what was happening in the family systems. I mean you can't be unaffected if you uplift a child with 29 broken bones, for example. So you can't be unaffected, and knowing this really is a huge impetus to correct it in any way that you can. That's just one example.

Working in social work field you see this sort of thing all the time, and it's institutional, it's systemic, it's embedded, it's very, very difficult to work with. And working in a micro way I thought, I discovered for myself it doesn't work. Doing it individual by individual, family by family, it is much, much bigger than that; which is one of the reasons why I joined this group willingly.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Kia ora Anne. Okay, another pātai from Andrea. "If you were in leadership roles to change the processes today, what would you advise?" So this is for Oranga Tamariki I guess.

>>MS COWAN: You know how long we've been retired?

>>MS CUMBERLAND: 35 years.

>>MS COWAN: Get the hell out of it, you know.

>>MS CUMBERLAND: Yeah, I wouldn't have a clue.

>>MS McDOWELL: It's almost like, yeah, I think part of it is that it's like trying to fix these little bits when actually, you know, the analogy which gets overused, the re-arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic, when actually that was the whole structural build of the Titanic, you know, it was the way that was built, it was then when something happened that hadn't been anticipated and just the whole impact, it just feels like it's kind of right through how it operates, that disconnect from tangata whenua. And of course you can't separate it out from, you know, the impact of decades of colonisation, poverty, the impact of all of that.

So I think part of it is actually being able to have a look at that wider picture and locating any specific part of it within that, because I think just fixing one thing, like we focused on, the number of Māori, the number of Pasifika staff, the number who could speak

their own reo, and actually when we look back on that now, we were like what were we thinking? How did we think that was going to make a big enough change?

And that did change over time, looking now at the number of staff who are tangata whenua, the number of staff who are Pasifika, the number of staff who speak te reo, speak their own Pasifika language. But actually has it made a difference? Has it made enough of a difference?

Sorry, that's a very broad answer, but I think I would be saying I don't have the answers, I would need to go and find out the people who do, and work with them, yeah.

>>MS CUMBERLAND: Look I think every day on the media, Māori media and Pākehā media, just as on last night's Māori Television programme, a woman Paora Moyle said "child protection must be dismantled. We must start again. By Māori for Māori, whakapapa-based, resourced by the government." I just keep hearing that message all the time.

And I think that's what we as Pākehā have got to think about, how can we support that, you know? Sometimes stepping aside, sometimes supporting, whatever. But, you know, there is just such a loud call for the total rebuilding of Departments across the board actually, based on by Māori for Māori.

>>MS RUCK: I'd agree with you, Tanya. My experiences of what goes on in terms of the Department is that it's systemic and it's intergenerational and it stretches back a long, long way. And the social work, as we practise, can't even begin to address it.

>>MS CUMBERLAND: No.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: All right, I've got another question from Folk(?). "The response from organisations is often just a policy refresh. How do you overcome this kind of tokenism if there is little interest in addressing the issue?" There's a hard one.

>>MS COWAN: Well, I mean what's a policy refresh? I mean we've been saying the same thing for a hell of a long time. I mean I certainly at the end of my career was finding that people were saying the same things, well we have been addressing racism and all that's changed deck chairs on Titanic.

But look at the movement of language from institutional to systemic, you know, if you like there might be different words used, but it's basically addressing the same problem. I think you have to look at the content of the policy refresh and support it if it's tika, if it's --

>>MS RUCK: I don't know, Lainey, how many name changes has Oranga Tamariki had in your career?

>>MS COWAN: Well, going back to your career it went through a few before I joined in 79, didn't it.

>>MS RUCK: 1975 to 2017 I think we had about five or six name changes, and I don't know why we did that, it was meant to reflect every time a new dawn, a new approach.

>>MS COWAN: And very often it weakened both the good and the bad, just weakened the total function and dribbled down to those of us at the frontline, didn't it.

>>MS RUCK: That's right, we're fiddling in a sense with a structure that perhaps is not doing what it should.

>>MS McDOWELL: I think with policy, having been at a couple of workshops run by the wonderful Heather Came-Friar who's responsible for bringing us all together after 37 years, and I think her critical Tiriti analysis, I think taking that and applying it to a policy is a good place to start, and getting a group that's -- you can hear that time and again, have people with you, have people with you.

And I think back to Ripeka Evans and her workshops that I've been on in the past and make sure you've got people who can pick up and lead or carry it forward when you need to just take a little break and move back and protect yourself for a while too. And again, that was one of the things that we really didn't do. We did talk about having a road show to take the report around the country, and to, yeah, to look at what next. But it was dismissed.

So I think, yeah, there are a number of tools. I see there's some things in the chat and I'm sure from the other sessions too there are ways of doing it. I think everybody needs support, and Heather's just put in our chat "it's never too late for a road show". We might not have the same in, Heather, as none of us work for the Department, yeah.

>>MS RUCK: That's interesting, Heather, but Puau-Te-Ata-Tu, of course, did do a road show, it went to 2, 300 marae, it was led by John Rangihau, a very respected rangatira and he spoke to all the iwi. So that has been done.

>>MS McDOWELL: Maybe there are things that they just need to keep on being done.

>>MS RUCK: I'd agree, yes.

>>MS McDOWELL: It's not like oh done that, that's it. We've done that and we need to just keep on doing it, yeah. The good stuff, the things that are effective.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: As a related question in the Q&A about policy, "although MSD now has a much higher percentage of Māori staff, there are still very few in policy roles" this person says. And this is true right across the public service, and they worry that it means that big P

policy is written with little or any input from Māori. Was that a focus, was policy a focus in your research, and what do you think about who writes policy now? Go Allyson.

>>MS DAVYS: Well, in the sense of policy was a focus in that we looked at the policy which related to the areas that we were investigating, but we didn't investigate who were the policymakers. So I think that in fact that's a really -- that's -- if you -- we could have a whole list of all the things we could have done differently or we could still do, and I think that whole issue about policymaking is really important, and how representative is it.

And it comes back, the question of who holds the power. Where is the power base in these big organisations, and what is the world view, the philosophy, and maybe the, yeah, what is the leverage that people have. I mean if you look at our big institutions, they tend to be white males still. Not all, but still. And so we actually don't have a diversity of any description.

And I guess, I suppose I want to say, and it comes back to one of the earlier comments from our research, that what we were looking at was institutional racism. And I suppose I actually really want to acknowledge and value all of the social workers and the workers who, over the last 40 years, have actually given their hearts and their time and their energy and their compassion to all the children that they've been looking after.

Because I think it's easy to clump everything into this box of these are bad practises. They're not good practises, but the individuals in them, most of them have got good hearts and good intentions, and I think that I'd like to acknowledge that and say that people have done a damn good job in really hard situations.

>>MS COWAN: Can I say, I think in terms of when I shifted from Tāmaki Makaurau back to Te Whanganui-a-Tara, and eventually washed up in MSD, there's a huge gap between social workers at the frontline and certainly in centres such as Tāmaki Makaurau, which have got a high influence from Māori in them. There's a huge divide from the frontline workers to policy, big P policy in head office. And I don't think they spoke to each other, I didn't get any sense of a connection between what was going on down here where you can lead a pretty white life to Auckland where you can't.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Kia ora Lainey, thank you. Ngā mihi nui ki ngā kaikōrero, many thanks to the speakers. Also to the volunteers and partners who have created this event, thanks particularly to Community Research for their webinar support, and about 40 supporting organisations involved in Te Tiriti-Based Futures and Anti-racism.

I hope you know that a recording of this webinar will be uploaded to YouTube, possibly, you know, in a few weeks, and it will be announced on the Te Tiriti-Based Futures and Anti-Racism Facebook group where you can continue this kōrero.

I'll close with a whakatauki and some wisdom from tauwi Treaty educators. Ma tini, ma mano, ka rapu te whai. By many, by thousands, we will attain our goals. Jen-Margaret and other tauwi Treaty workers say that tauwi, particularly Pakeha, need to dig deep and honestly into the colonising consciousness that we carry. We need to be self-reflective, self-aware and to take action that supports tino rangatiratanga and the Matike Mai vision, where the Pākehā nation as a subset of tangata Tiriti cooperate with Māori to create a Te Tiriti based future.

Thank you for your participation, thank you for your questions, go well.

>>MS COWAN: Thank you for your chats. Lovely to have those comments.